

III. REMARKS

Claims 10-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-9 have been cancelled and claim 12 has been amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(b) because the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance as discussed below; (b) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration; and (c) places the application in better form for appeal. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment.

Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections or objections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected or objected-to claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application.

In the Final Office Action, claims 1, 2, and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,999,541 to Hinchey *et al.*, claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious in view of Hinchey *et al.*, and claims 5 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hinchey *et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,404,424 to Zhao *et al.* Each of the rejected claims has been cancelled.

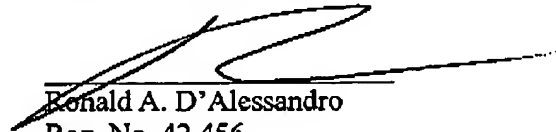
In the Final Office Action, claims 10-12 are objected to under 35 C.F.R. 1.75 as being substantially duplicative of claims 2 and 6-8, and claims 6-8, while also objected to, are identified as allowable if rewritten in independent form. For the sake of clarity, claims 2 and 6-8 have been cancelled and Applicants assert that claims 10-12 are allowable. Claim 12 has been amended to correct a typographical error.

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In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the application. Should the Examiner require anything further from Applicants, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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